

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend page 2, second full paragraph, to read as follows:

[In this connection] More particularly, it has been found that the efficiency of a [flipper] conventional swimming fin has a first limitation in [the fact] that the rigid blade [will] generally bends only in a plane substantially at right angles to the plane of the undeformed blade, its transverse sections being maintained substantially constant.

Please amend page 2, third full paragraph, to read as follows:

[Furthermore] Second, it has [also] been found [that], from a hydrodynamic point of view, that the fin's efficiency [of the flipper] is to some extent negatively affected by the presence of [the] buckles [of] on the closing strap of the shoe[, since these]. This is because the buckles typically project sideways and [constitute] are thus an obstacle to the free flow of [the] water along the [flipper] fin.

Please amend from after paragraph 5 on page 4 to before the first full paragraph on page 5 to read as follows:

As shown in [Figures] FIGS. 5 and 6, the blade extends rearward[s]ly, generally in the form of two relatively identical arms 5 delimiting a central opening 4 that [substantially] constitutes substantially the seating [for] of shoe 2[,]. The seating [which] is

preferably mo[u]lded below the plane of the blade [1]. Arms 5 desirably extend with an arcuate profile to form flanks 6 containing the shoe and terminating with respective rigid hoods[, which]. The hoods are preferably convex towards the outside and have respective butterfly-shaped openings 8 at their [centre] center[, the purpose of which will be explained later on].

Please amend page 5, first full paragraph, to read as follows:

According to one embodiment, [L]lateral ribs 3 are mo[u]lded along a portion of the lateral edges of the blade [1] and extend along sides 6 [right] through to the root or base of their respective hoods [7].

Please amend page 5, second full paragraph, to read as follows:

As shown [by Figure] in FIG. 5, blade 1 [is provided with] includes a pair of longitudinal slots 9 substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of the [flipper] fin and extending from just beyond the middle of the blade [1 right] through to its free edge 10. The [B]blade [1] is also provided with two diagonal openings 11 formed at the sides of [the] a forward end of opening 4 and diverging from the opening toward[s] the lateral edges of the blade [1].

Please amend page 5, third full paragraph, to read as follows:

Shoe 2 is desirably mo[u]lded onto blade 1 in the third stage of the mo[u]lding process, which simultaneously fills the two slots 9 and [the] two openings 11 preferably with the same material, thereby [obtaining] producing generally flattened ribs 12 and 13 that operate jointly [act] as elastic hinges.

Please amend page 5, fourth full paragraph, to read as follows:

The thickness of flattened ribs 12 and 13, which fill slots 9 and openings 11, is preferably greater than the thickness of rigid blade 1. In [fact] particular, flattened ribs 12 and 13 are made of a material that is generally less rigid than the blade material [and their]. Their inferior mechanical characteristics [must] are, therefore, [be] at least partially compensated [by means of] for using a greater thickness. Advantageously, flattened ribs 12 and 13, arranged in slots 9, may also be provided with relatively thin longitudinal fins 14 for direct[ion]ing the flow.

Please amend from after the fourth full paragraph on page 5 to before the first full paragraph on page 6 to read as follows:

Along a free edge 10 of the blade [1], [there is provided] a relatively wide [and] flattened curb 15 is preferably provided that closes longitudinal slots 9 of the blade. According to one aspect of the present invention, the [C]curb [15] is made of the same material as shoe 2 and, during [in] the mo[u]lding stage, is produced [by means of] desirably using two thin feeder channels 16 that do not interrupt the continuity of the

blade and are situated in its central part[, the channels being shown in Figure 1, as] As shown in FIG. 1, the channels are filled with the relatively yielding material.

Please amend page 6, first full paragraph, to read as follows:

The material of the shoe [also covers with], namely, a partial lining 17, advantageously covers those portions [the parts] of [the] lateral ribs [2] 3 that have the greatest likelihood of [being] damage[d by] from contact with [such] hard materials such as stones, reefs and the like. Toward[s the] free end 10 of the blade, the partial lining 17 preferably combines with or [becomes] join[ed]s [to] curb 15.

Please amend page 6, second full paragraph, to read as follows:

Flattened ribs 12 and 13 [constitute], as areas of reduced rigidity on the blade, [with the] function [of acting] as hinges [in the truest sense of the term]. In particular, when [S]subjected to the thrust of [the] a swimmer's foot, the[y permit] ribs enable the blade to [substantially] assume substantially a concave form with substantially plane walls. [In particular, in] Specifically, under these conditions, the blade assumes a trapezoidal-like profile in the transverse direction [that has] where its inclined sides [constituted by the] are formed by portions of the blade [comprised] between the lateral edges and fins 14, [while] whereas its shorter base is [constituted] formed by the central portion of the blade [comprised] between fins 14 and extending as far as the flattened

diagonal ribs 13 with a profile approximately equal to the one indicated by [means of] the broken line in [Figure] FIG. 1 and [indicated by means of] the reference number 18.

Please amend page 6, third full paragraph, to read as follows:

The elastic hinges provided on the blade, constituted by ribs 12 and 13 formed in slots 9 and openings 11, enable the blade to assume a concave shape both during the power stroke and during the return stroke, when the blade encounters [a] lesser resistance, [thus] thereby improving the fin's overall performance [of the flipper].

Please amend page 7, paragraph 1, to read as follows:

It is desirable that [T]the lining of relatively yielding material 17 extend[s] along the flanks 6 of blade 1, from the lateral edges of the blade, [right] through to the vicinity of hood 7. The cross section of lining 17 becomes considerably thicker along these flanks so as to generate respective fairings 19 that convey the [water] flow of water to above a pair of buckles 20 arranged at the two ends of a strap 21 that closes the shoe. Advantageously and preferably, buckle 20 [will be] is of the so-called “fast” type, already [extensively] used extensively for this application, and comprises a sheath 22 and a shutter 23, generally of three-pronged shape.

____According to [a characteristic] another aspect of the present invention, sheath 22 is provided on its interior face with a head 24 having a shape generally equal to that of opening 8 formed on hood 7 of flanks 6 [of blade 1]. As shown [I]in [Figure] FIG. 7,

head 24 of the buckle is [shown] engaged with the seating [constituted by] which comprises the hood [7]. Th[e]is connection is [made] accomplished by [bringing] moving the sheath [22] of the buckle [20] into a position that is rotated [through] 90° [with respect] relative to its working position, inserting head 24 into opening 8, and [then] rotating the sheath [through] 90° in such a way that the head [24 will] bears against the walls delimiting the respective opening [8]. It should be noted that, given the exemplary solution [here] illustrated, the buckle can preferably tolerate an angular excursion of about $\pm 45^\circ$ [with respect] relative to its normal working position, i.e., the one shown in [Figure] FIG. 7[, and t]. This makes it possible to vary the inclination of the strap by a similar amount according to the particular needs of the swimmer, [thus] and thereby improv[ing]e the comfort of the [flipper] fin. Also notable is that openings 25 may be provided on fairings 19, such openings having a predominantly aesthetic function.

Please amend page 7, paragraph 2, to read as follows:

[Openings 25 having a predominantly aesthetic function may be provided on the fairings 19.]